GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:233
ANSWERED ON:13.03.2001
PRICES OF DRUGS FOR AIDS
NARESH KUMAR PUGLIA

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a): whether AIDS is acquiring epidemic proportions in the country;

(b): if so, the details in this regard;

(c): whether the prices of drugs known to provide relief in the said disease are exhorbitant in the market;

(d): if so, the details thereof;

(e): the reasons for exhorbitant prices of these drugs;

(f): whether the Government have taken any measures to bring down the prices of these drugs in the market; and
(g): if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA)

(a) to (g): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.233 FOR ANSWER ON 13TH MARCH

(a) and (b): Based on the analysis of 1999 Sentinel surveillance data collected from among 180 sites, the HIV prevalence can be broadly classified into three groups of States/Uts in the country.

Group I: includes States like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland where the HIV infection has crossed 1% or more in antenatal women.

Group II: includes States like Gujarat, Goa and Pondicherry, where HIV infection has crossed 5% or more among high risk groups but the infection is below 1% in antenatal women.

Group III: includes remaining States where the HIV infection in any of the high risk groups is still less than 5% and is less than 1% among antenatal women.

(c) and (d): The drugs for treatment of AIDS are outside the purview of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995. As per available information from various sources/publications like ORG- MARG, Indian Drug Review (IDR), Monthly Index of Medical Specialties (MIMS) of India, there are about 20 medicines available in different pack sizes based on 4 bulk drugs, viz., Lamivudine, Zidovudine, Nevirapine and Stavudine. The prices per unit (Tablet/capsule) of these medicines vary between Rs.10.00 per tablet of Zydowin (100mg) manufactured/marketed by M/s. Zydus-Biogen to Rs.82.00 per tablet of Combivir (150mg) manufactured/marketed by M/s. Glaxo-Wellcome.

It has also been noticed that prices of some AIDS drugs have decreased during the past 3 years. The price of Zidovir capsules of M/s. Cipla has been reduced from Rs,.185.31 (July/September,1999) to Rs.100.80 (December, 2000). Similarly, the price of Lamivir (150mg/10s) of M/s. Cipla has been reduced from Rs.500.00 (December, 1998) to Rs.325.89 (December, 2000). The price of Retrovir capsules (100mg/100s) of M/s. Glaxo Wellcome has remained same but its sale value has reduced substantially.

(e): The common reasons for rise in prices of medicines in general are rise in prices of raw materials, transport/freight charges, change in foreign exchange rates, changes in taxes and duties, etc.

(f) & (g): The Drug Policy, as amended from time to time, is directed towards ensuring abundant availability of quality drugs at reasonable prices.